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FACT SHEET

WATER BANK PROGRAM

United States Department of Agriculture • Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service

April 1992

PURPOSE

The Water Bank Program (WBP) is designed to preserve and improve major wetlands as habitat for migratory waterfowl and other wildlife; conserve surface waters; reduce runoff, soil, and wind erosion; contribute to flood control; improve water quality; improve subsurface moisture; and enhance the natural beauty of the landscape.

ADMINISTRATION

County ASC committees administer the program with planning and technical services provided by the Soil Conservation Service.

SCOPE OF PROGRAM

The WBP operates primarily in the northern part of the Central flyway and the northern and southern part of the Mississippi River flyway which are the major migratory water routes used by waterfowl. The program also operates along other flyways in States where the program is authorized.

PROGRAM PROVISIONS

The WBP applies to wetlands identified in a conservation plan developed in cooperation with the Soil and Water Conservation District in which the lands are located and under terms and conditions established by the Secretary of Agriculture.

For Water Bank Program purposes, the term "wetlands" is defined as inland fresh areas (types one through seven) described in Circular 39, Wetlands of the United States, published by the U.S. Department of the Interior. This definition includes artificially developed inland fresh areas which meet this description. The seven types are: seasonally flooded basins or flats, fresh meadows, shallow fresh marshes, deep fresh marshes, open fresh water, shrub swamps, and wooded swamps.

Other adjacent privately-owned land may be designated upon determination by county Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation committees that this land is needed to protect the wetland or is essential for the nesting, breeding, or feeding of migratory waterfowl. The adjacent land must adjoin the wetland or be within one-quarter mile of the wetland. Eligible persons having eligible wetlands in important migratory waterfowl nesting, breeding, or feeding areas enter into 10-year agreements, which may be renewed, to protect wetlands and provide habitat for migratory waterfowl.

All agreements are reviewed at the beginning of the fifth year of the contract, and payment rates may be adjusted to reflect current land values and rental rates.

**LEGISLATIVE
AUTHORITY**

The Water Bank Program was authorized by the Water Bank Act which was passed by Congress December 19, 1970, and amended January 2, 1980.

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This Program or Activity will be Conducted on a Nondiscriminatory Basis Without Regard To Race, Color, Religion, National Origin, Age, Sex, Marital Status, or Disability.